

SAY ON:

OR, A

Seasonable Plea

FOR A

FULL HEARING

BETWIXT

Man and Man.

And, a Serious Plea for the  
Hearing, betwixt God and Man.

Delivered in a

SERMON

A T

*Chelmsford* in *Essex*, at the General  
Assize holden for the said County,  
before the Honourable Sir *Timothy*  
*Littleton*, one of his Majesty's Barons  
of his Exchequer: *July 8. 1678.*

By *Anthony Walker*, D. D. Rector of  
*Fyfield* in the same County.

*Luk. 7. 40. Master, Say on.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Nathanael Ranew* at the  
*King's Arms* in *S. Paul's Church-*

*Yard. 1679. & 2. 147 B.*

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October 1864

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To the Right Worship-  
ful S<sup>r</sup>. WILLIAM  
DYER Baronet, of  
Tottenham-high-cross,  
High Sheriff of the  
County of Essex.

WORTHY SIR;

**Y**OU cannot be more  
surprised to see those  
Notes made publick,  
than I was (being then  
so wholly a stranger to  
you) by your desi-  
ring me to perform that service  
which occasioned their composure.  
And though you us'd a civil Apology,  
for giving me so short a warning for

## The Epistle Dedicatory,

so solemn an appearance, I shall trouble you and the world with none, for yielding to their importunity who drew them from me.

I confess an obvious objection occurred, which would have resisted all their entreaties, had I esteemed so low a consideration, as my own reputation, fit to be put into the balance against the good, I was made believe, they may do, viz. lest the acceptance they obtain'd, when transiently delivered to the ear, they should lose, when exposed to the severer censure of the Eye. It being no unusual thing for Discourses to sink, when divested of the advantage of being spoken with some quickness, warmth, and pathos. But if they meet with common candour in the Reader, which I request, and modestly expect, I hope they may be useful. However, his expence will be so little, either of money or time, that a small charity may excuse his disappointment, if any happen.

I have



The Epistle Dedicatory.

*I have, Sir, inscribed your name upon them, as a testimony of my respects, the omission of which would have been so indecent, that I hope it will neither by your self, nor others, be imputed as a fault, to*

July 17,  
1678.

Worthy Sir,

Your Loving

Friend and Servant

*Anthony Walker.*

---

Imprimatur ,

Geo. Thorp Rever.  
Patri Guliel. Ar-  
chiep. Cant. a sac.  
Domest.

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A N

# Afsize Sermon:

DELIVERED AT

*Chelmsford*, July 8. 1678.

2 S. A. M. 14. 12.

*Say on.*

**T** Hough a *Short* Text,  
and as *Short* a  
Warning be no  
good *Prefaces* to a  
long Sermon, they  
may be no *bad* or  
unwelcome *Earnests* of a *short*  
one, as I design this shall be;

A 4

not

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not to comply with the humour of those un-devout Souls, to whom every thing is *tedious* which is *serious*, and to whom holy *David* himself, though the sweet Singer of *Israel*, *prolixè canit*, is too long: as *St. Gregory Nazianzen* observes in his sixteenth Oration, and the sacred *Melody* of whose *Psalms* cannot expiate, or atone for the length of them.

But to comport decently with the present occasion, that the *Pulpit* may not intrench upon the *Tribunal*, nor the *first* Table over-lay the *second*; or crowd it up into too narrow a room.

The words are a very *small*, yet a most *considerable* part, of the *largest* and best managed Parable in all the old Testament; contrived by subtle *Joab*, and carried on, and acted by the wise *Woman* of *Tekosh*, whom the Jewish *Rabbins* will needs have to be the *Grandmother*

for a Full Hearing. 3

ther of the Prophet *Amos*, a Native and Inhabitant of the same place, which, *S. Ferom* tells us, was a small Town nine Miles distant from *Ferusalem*.

The use of *Parables*, though it was not unknown to other Nations, witness that famous one of *Menius Agrippa* among the Romans, by which he successfully appeased a dangerous, popular Sedition; and those many witty ones of honest *Esop*, amongst the Grecians; yet was it more signally frequent amongst the Hebrews and Syrians, as the Learned *Grotius* observes; and as by that remarkable one of *Fotham*, *Judg. 9.* and many other in the Old Testament; and by our Saviours frequent use of them, evidently appears.

And though the *first* Design of them seems to have been to instruct the rude and ignorant multitude, whose minds are less susceptible of  
the

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the impressions of solid Reason, they being a kind of mental Pictures, (and you know. who call Pictures *Lay-mens* Books) by which the matter is represented more lively to the Fancy and Imagination.

Yet the *second* end of them is to insinuate conviction and reproof insensibly into their minds, who would be less patient of it, in express words, or plainer Reprehensions. And thus *Nathan* had proceeded with *David* in the case of *Uriah* and *Bathsheba*, chap. 12. and succeeded happily to ensnare him into *Repentance*, by the *Parable* of the poor Man's Ewe-Lamb.

And thus *Isab* by the Woman of *Tekoa* attacks him here, by a fiction of her two Sons striving together in the Field, and the one slaying the other, and the rest of the Family rising up to put him to death.

The scope of the whole was to prevail

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prevail with *David* to recall *Absolom* from *Geshur*, whither he had fled, and where he had remained in Banishment three years after the slaying of his Brother *Amnon*.

Although there is a great deal of excellent matter in the *Parable*; and some would find even much of the *Gospel* in it; to instance but in one Verse, viz. 14. which runs thus: *For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: neither doth God respect any person, yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him.* As if it imported these three Particulars.

1. The forlorn Estate of man by the first *Apostacy*, and his desperate case that can no more recover himself, than water spilt upon the Ground, and drunk up by it, can be gathered up again.

2. That *no man*, in *David's* Phrase, can redeem his Brother, or give to  
God

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*God a ransom for him. For God respects nothing that any Man can do.*

3. Yet he himself helps, when no creature could, by his unsearchable wisdom *devising means* ( Job 33. 24. *Deliver him from the pit, for I have found a ransom* ) by Christ, to satisfy *Justice*, and magnify *Mercy*; to punish the *Sin*, and spare the *Sinner*, that his banished from *Paradise* may not be expelled from *Heaven*.

But I must dismiss and wave whatever is contain'd in the Body of the *Parable*, and single out this seasonable Passage, *Say on.*

Which words are so plain, they need no Explication; and so few, they admit no Division: the only *Method* that remains to handle them, seems to be this, to consider, *A quo, cui, quo fine dicta sunt.*



for a Full Hearing. 7

1. By whom they were spoken  
By *David*, a *King*, and a *Judge*.

2. To whom they were spoken :  
To the *Widow* woman of *Tekoa*,  
a *Petitioner*, a *Plaintiff*, who stood  
before him for *Help* and *Judg-*  
*ment*.

3. To what end and intent they  
were spoken : To give her leave and  
encouragement to make her *Plea* as  
fully as she could, and to grant her a  
fair Hearing before he pronounced  
sentence in her case.

Of these in order.

First, Of the person who spake  
them, *David*, the *King*, the *Judge*  
to whom this Woman addressed her  
self, *vers. 4. Help, O King. So v.*  
*My Lord, O King. So in this*  
*next Verse. Let thy handmaid, I*  
*say thee, speak one word unto my Lord*  
*the King: and he said, Say on.*

This

### 8      **I Seasonable Plea**

This *Book* is filed by a Learned Expositor, the *Throne* of *David*, whom the *Holy Ghost* represents as the *Exemplar* and *Icon* of an excellent *Magistrate*, who himself had learn'd and practis'd that Lesson he taught his Son; *He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.* And this is not the least instance and proof of it, (that according to the old Verse,

—— *Patiens sit Judicis auris* )

he was willing to hear out the *Plea* of her who stood before him for help, and by the forgetting which *Rule*, and deflecting from which *Method*, he contracted one of the foulest blots we read him to have stained his Justice with, in all his Government: I mean in the case of *Mephibosheth*, 2 Sam. 19. 29. He said, *Why speakest thou any more of thy matters, I have said thou and Ziba divide*

for a full Hearing. 9

*divide the land.* Which precipitate Sentence had been prevented, and an *innocent Master* delivered from the slanders of a *treacherous servant*, if instead of *why speakest thou any more!* he had said as he doth here, *Say on,*

So that the words are a *commendable instance* (which may have the force of a *standing rule*) of a good *Magistrate*, giving leave, and encouragement to those who stand before them for Judgment, to say all they can to make good their *Plea*, and to grant them a full Hearing.

And to shew the excellency of this *Rule*, we shall look upon the Words under several *Aspects*.

1. As they are *vox humane nature*, the voice of humane nature, breaking forth from that first principle of it; *Do as thou wouldst be done by.* No Judge or Magistrate, if instead of sitting on the *Bench* (excuse the supposition, which I will not make, but

but with a modest Apology) he should stand at the Bar as a reputed *Criminal*, or as a *Plaintiff* or *Defendant*, would be willing to have Judgment pass, till his *Plea* were made, and he had obtained a full and fair Hearing. Therefore as we use to phrase it, *Turn the Tables*. Let the *Reverend Judge* suppose himself in his Circumstances who comes before him in Judgment, and then do as Nature it self dictates, as he would be done by. Hear him out, say as he would desire it should be said to himself. *Say on.*

• That's the first, they are the *voice of humane nature*.

2. They are *verba sapientia*, words of wisdom. Wisdom is highly requisite in a Judge. Therefore *Solomon* (wise already) made it his Prayer, which God so highly approved, *1 Kings 3.9. Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people.* Or as it is, *1 Chron.*

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1. 10. Give me wisdom and understanding, for who can judge this thy people that is so great. And Hiram blessed God for giving to his Friend David a wise Son to judge his people Israel. Now wisdom consists in the adapting *sutable means* for the attainment of *desirable ends*. The end of judicial proceedings, is to give to every Man what is *right*, and due to him. Now what *means* can be so fit, and conduce so evidently to this, as to sift out truth by a full and fair hearing of all the Allegations, Pleas, and Defences of the Parties concerned. 'Twas this that gave Solomon that Renown in judging betwixt the two Harlots, 1 King. 3. ult. That all who heard it said, *The wisdom of God was in him to do judgment*. For 'twas from their own mouths he discovered which was the true Mother of the Child, which he had never done had he not let them *Say on*.

B

3. Verba

3. *Verba justitia & aequitatis,*  
*They are words of Equity and Righte-*  
*ousness.* 'Tis most just to hear Men  
 out what they have to say, before  
 they be condemned, or acquitted:  
 therefore 'tis a customary question  
 after Indictment read, and Evidence  
 produced, *What canst thou say for*  
*thy self?* and no Proclamation  
 more common in Courts than *Let*  
*them come forth, and they shall be heard.*  
 'Tis a Rule in every Man's Mouth.

*Qui aliquid statuerit, parte inaudita*  
*altera,*  
*Aequum licet statuerit, haud aequus ta-*  
*men fuerit.*

He that determines anything with-  
 out hearing both sides, although he  
 chances to determine what is just, yet  
 is not just himself in so determining.

Therefore 'twas praise-worthy  
 Justice in Agrippa, Act. 26, that he  
 said

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said to the Prisoner, *Paul, thou art permitted to speak for thy self.* And it was a standing Rule amongst the Romans (a People so renowned for their *Justice*, that *S. Augustine* ascribes all their Successes to God's rewarding of their Justice) *not to deliver any Man to die, till the Accused had his Accusers face to face, and liberty to answer for himself, Act. 25. 16.*

4. They are *verba misericordiae*, words of mercy, and commendable compassion and condescension.

The awful Solemnities which attend Courts of Judicature, do often strike a consternation into those who appear before them; and few Men, of low and common Education, have that *presence of spirit and audacity*; whether *Principals* or *Witness*, to recollect themselves suddenly.

'Tis therefore very commendable compassion to relieve them against their fears and amazements, and

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not to discourage or put them out of countenance, nor suffer others to do it, but rather to raise them to a just confidence, by bearing with, and helping them against their weaknesses, with these, or words of the same import, *Say on*, be not dismayed, or afraid, but speak freely, let us hear all you have to say.

5. Lastly, They are *verba patientie*, words of patience; than which, nothing is a greater ornament to the Tribunals of Justice, no word worse becoming their mouths who sit on them, than *non vacat*, which made the poor Woman reply so smartly to Philip of Macedon, who when she demanded Audience and Justice of him, said, *He could not tend it, or was not at leisure: Why then will you be King? I pray, Sir, let some body else be that can and will.*

*De vita hominis nulla cunctatio longa.*

No



No deliberation, no delay should be esteemed long, in which so precious a thing as the life of a Man is concerned.

And because you *Gentlemen* of the *Long Robe* have a just veneration for the sage and grave Sayings of your *Predecessors*, I'll cite a memorable and very commendable Passage I heard near forty years ago at *Cambridge Castle*, from the Lord Chief Justice *Banks*, when an inferiour Officer of the Court prayed him to make haste, for they should be too late. He openly replied, *I had rather travel all night, or put my self to any inconvenience, than the King's Justice should be denied to any of his Liege People, or huddle over business for want of time to hear it fairly.*

And this for the *Speaker*, as they are the words of a *King* or *Fudge*, ecchoing the sentiments of humane nature, speaking as a wise, a just, a merciful, a patient *Fudge*, Say on.

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All Virtues so ornamental to Tribunals, that nothing can be more.

I proceed to the *second* Consideration: that is, of the *Person to whom* they were spoken: that is, to a *Petitioner*, a *Plaintiff*, who came to plead her cause before him as her *Judge*.

And First, they were *dicta mulieri*, *spoken to a woman*; whose Sex expos'd her to some prejudice, as not needing over much encouragement to speak: yet he saith not, She'll talk enough without bidding; and if I encourage her, she'll never have done. *No idle or frivolous pretences should debar those whose Lives, Estates, or other near Concernments lye at stake, from a full and fair Hearing.* He saith to the Woman, *Say on,*

2. *Dicta Vidua*, they were spoken to a Widow. Widow-hood is a forlorn estate, and Widow is a desolate name. Had the Plaintiff been a great man, no wonder that such an one should obtain a Full Hearing. But to give leave and encouragement to a poor, to a desolate Widow, to say on, this was much to be wondered at, but more to be commended. 'Twas such a piece of Justice in righteous Job that rendred him so eminent: the words are so remarkable, I cannot omit the rehearsal of them at large: Job 29. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. *When the ear heard me, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. Because I delivered the poor that cryed, and the fatherless and him that had none to help him. The Blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon me, and I caused the widows heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it cloathed me, my judgment was*

*a Robe and Diadem. . I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out: and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.* Than which words there can be no better Commentary upon *David's* saying to a desolate and poor widow, *Say on.*

3. *Dicta Reo*, spoken to a guilty person. For if it be true, that in the eye of the Law, *Actor & Reus eandem sustinent personam*: What is said to *him* or *her* that pleads the cause of the *guilty*, is said as to the *guilty*. To suspend prejudice, and to hear out a presumed guilty party, argues much candor and moderation. The Law supposes every man *honest* and *innocent*: and every man's cause *just* and *good*, till it is found, and appears otherwise; and that

## for a Full Hearing. 19

that cannot be without discussing it; therefore no presumptive prejudices should stop their mouths, or debar them their *Plea*. Let even such therefore *Say on*.

4. *Diſta reo parricidii*, they were ſpoken to one guilty of Murder, the worſt of Crimes, and *Fratricide* the worſt of Murders. The fouleſt offences cut not off the offender from liberty to plead his cauſe, to defend, and if he can, to clear himſelf: which minds me of God's own proceeding with *Cain* in the very ſame Circumſtances, when he had ſlain his Brother *Abel*; Gen. 4. *Where is thy Brother? What haſt thou done?* Which Questions imply a liberty to answer, left him.

5. *Diſta conſitenti*, to one who had confeſſed the Fact, and in effect accuſed him whom ſhe came to defend  
and

and plead for; Circumstances oft alter the case very much, and great alleviations may be urged, which may extenuate the fault, though they neither do, or can deny the Fact: therefore even *confitenti reo*, say, Say on.

6. But lastly, *dicta humili & supplicanti*, they were spoke to one who was humble and modest, and made request for audience: ver. 4. She fell on her face and made obeysance. She said, Let thy handmaid I pray thee, speak a word to my Lord the King. She made supplication to her Judge: she behaved not her self unseemly, she did not extort an Hearing with noise and clamour: nor like the other Widow, Luke 18. weary him out with importunity, and so teaze the Judge, that he did her Justice to be quiet, and reliev'd her in his own defence: no, she sought it humbly, and

and obtain'd it candidly.

'Tis infinitely indecent, and a great defecrating and prophaning so sacred a place as a Court of Judicature, and so holy a thing as Justice it self is, to bawl, and jeer, and make a noise, and is so far from being manly, that this Woman may shame them to use their Tongues better. And such procedure gives just suspicion, that the *merits* of that cause are not very good, which needs the raising so much dust, to cloud them from the eyes of *sober Reason*.

When *S. Paul* pleaded before King *Agrippa* and *Festus*, his Plea was words of truth and soberness: *Act. 26. 25.*

The King's presumed present in his Courts, and a greater than *He*, the King of Kings, He judgeth amongst

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*mongst the Gods, the judgment is the Lord's.*

Therefore all things should be carried as becomes such a presence, *gravely, modestly, soberly, seriously*, for though every good *Fudge* will say to such, with *David* here, *Say on.* I suppose no wise *Fudge* will say in earnest what *Job* once said in *Irony*, *Job 21. 3. Mock on.*

3. *Quo fine, for what end*, intent, or purpose did he give her this leave and encouragement to *Say on.* Certainly for many wise, and great and good ones, to suggest some of which, may be useful and exemplary.

*First, To find out the truth and right.* The *Tongue* is the *Heart's* Interpreter, and other mens Informer; and truth is often bolted out, by the moving of the Lips.

A plain



A plain Story innocently told, that comes freely without pains, disguise, or artifice, that is coherent and self consistent, is a good argument of honest simplicity. When on the other side, fair liberty of Speech being granted, if they shuffle, hesitate, and stick, contradict themselves, and have little or nothing to say, 'tis a shrewd presumption all is not right; and so (though it be uncomely in this place, to name the Proverb, 'tis like occurs to all your thoughts) offenders are oft *ensnared by their own lips*: and *their tongues fall upon themselves*, and they are *judged out of their own mouths*.

For nothing is easier than to tell a true Story plainly, as the matter is, truth being always consistent with it self, and to defend a just and honest cause, which carries with it it's  
OWN

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own evidence. So nothing is harder than to make a false matter appear true, and a foul cause to appear just and clear to a discerning mind. Let them therefore *Say on*, 'tis the way to *clear the innocent, to convict the guilty*, and bring truth to light.

2. *To preserve the honour of Judicial Proceedings*, which is of great Concernment.

While the *Judge* judges the *Criminals*, or between the parties *litigant*, all the Assembly will be sure to judge him: and therefore 'tis not enough to decree what is just; but to make it manifest that he proceeds justly; even *God* himself, whose nature secures him from all unrighteousness, and makes it impossible for him to do injustice, yet takes care to make it apparent, that he proceeds justly, that *he may be justified when he speaketh*, and  
clear

clear when he judgeth. As we have it, *Psal. 51. 4.* or as the Apostle turns the words, *Rom. 3. 4.* *That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.* God himself cannot escape the censure of the world; and therefore for the honour of his Righteousness he will manifest his proceedings to be just, that no place may be left for cavil or reproach.

3. *To put an end to strife and contention.* What is the reason of bringing the same cause so often over, but pretence of not having had a fair Hearing at the first. What's well done, is twice done. And trying Causes well once, would prevent the trying of them, it may be, twice or thrice: 'tis not only for your honour therefore, but for your ease, to let them, *Say on.*

4. *To*

4. *To prevent clamour.* We have a Proverb, *Losers will have leave to talk*, and they often talk so much when they have lost, because they had not leave to talk, to prevent their losing. Let them therefore *Say on* before the Sentence, and they will have nothing to say after. Yea, the *condemned Criminals* will yield their lives more silently, and calmly, and submissly to the Law, when Condemnation was not awarded, till they had liberty to make their best defence.

5. *To restrain the violence of proud oppressing Men.* Nothing so much emboldens great Men to oppress, and wrong, and grind the poor, as a confidence that their complaints will not be heard or regarded.

Now if the *Magistrate* will consider

sider the cause of the *needy* and *afflicted*, the *Fatherless*, and *Widow*, the *poor* and *helpless* when they cry to him, this will be a mighty restraint, that *the man of the earth shall no more oppress*.

The one would not dare to *lay on* so unmercifully, as oft they do, if they knew the other should obtain so merciful a *Say on*, when they make complaint.

6. *Lastly, that true sentence may pass*, according to the merits of the Cause, and as shall appear just upon a Full Hearing. This is the Life and Crown of all; for of the two it were better, and more tolerable to huddle up a business, and precipitate a Sentence, though this be a very great fault, than to pass Sentence against, and give Judgment contrary to the merits of a Cause, and what hath been made appear upon a

Full Hearing to be just and righteous.

Therefore that a *sacred Court* may not be branded with the prophane name of a *fortuitous Lottery*, let the Pleader *Say on*; and let his so doing be crown'd with the *Reverend Judges*, saying in his Sentence what is *Just and Right*, according to the apparent merits of the Cause. And thus far briefly of the Words, as they have an aspect on the Assize.

But I may well suppose you are not all concern'd in the *peculiar business of the day*, and the special occasion of this Solemn Appearance: and so my Discourse hath hitherto not reached many of you: and I would be loath that any man should wholly lose his labour of Attendance here, especially by my fault.

I shall

I shall therefore borrow a short liberty for a double improvement of these Words, *Say on*, in a more *spiritual manner*; and so, as may be of an *universal influence* and use.

First, *Give God a fair Hearing*; interrupt him not, let him *Say on*, when he pleads his own cause to provoke you to your Duty, or to convince you of your neglect of it.

Secondly, *Bethink your selves what you have to say, make your Plea ready*, against God's calling you to account. When he shall say to you, why do you, or why did you so, or so, and what canst thou say for thy self, why thou shouldst not be condemned? *Say on*, thou shalt have a fair Hearing, say what thou canst for thy

thy self: take heed your ways be not so unaccountable, that you must then stand *mute*, and have nothing to *say* for your selves, when God bids you *Say on*.

First, As to what God hath to say to you, grant him a fair Hearing, cut him not short, interrupt him not, but say unto him, *Say on*.

And that this may appear less *forc'd*, yea, *proper* and *pertinent*: I may argue thus, If it be incumbent on the *Judge* to bid the Prisoner, the Pleader, the Plaintiff or Defendant, *Say on*, 'tis much more necessary, equal, and becoming, that they should hear the Judge; and most of all, that we should hear him that is the *Judge of all men, the Judge of all the earth*.

But nearer yet, if the *Judge* must hear



hear the Pleader, *Man* must hear *God*: for he vouchsafes, (oh astonishing condescension!) to make man judge, and to plead his own Cause before the Tribunal of *Man's* Reason. *Isa. 1. 18. Come let us reason together.* And *5. 3. O men of Judah, judge ye I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard.*

Where *God's* Plea is managed with such strength of Reason, such convictive evidence, such unanswerable clearness, that *Interest* it self cannot bribe man to forbear giving sentence on *God's* side.

So the Prophet *Samuel* on *God's* behalf, *1 Sam. 12. 7.* appeals to themselves while he pleads *God's* cause, *Stand still that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and your Fathers.* So *Fer.*

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2.9. *I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your childrens children will I plead.* See also *Ezek.* 20. 35, 36. See also that full place to this purpose, *Mich.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *Hear ye now what the Lord saith—— for the Lord hath a controversie with his people, and he will plead with Israel—— O my people, what have I done unto thee,—— testifie against me. —— That you may know the righteousness of the Lord.* Now is it not all the reason in the world, that when *God* appeals to *Man*, and makes him *Judge*, and pleads before him, that he should allow him a fair *Hearing*; and let him *Say on*,

But to make all sure, that we proceed pertinently, we have an instance *in terminis*, *S. Luke* 7. 40. where *Simon* the Pharisee useth this very word to our Lord  
Christ

**for a Full Hearing. 33**

Christ himself, Master, Say on.

Now I most earnestly exhort and adjure you to do likewise. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. Turn not away from him who speaks from Heaven, Heb. 12. 25. To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Say with Samuel, Speak Lord, thy servant heareth. Resolve with David, I will hearken what God the Lord will speak, Psal. 85. 8. and with Simon, Lord, Master, Say on.

Now God speaks once, yea, twice, Job 33. 14. yea, thrice.

1. God speaks to thee by the voice of thy Conscience.

2. God speaks to thee by the voice of his Word.

C 4

3. God

3. God speaks to thee by the secret voice of his Spirit.

1. He speaks to Man by the voice of his Conscience. *The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord,* Prov. 20. 27. So 'tis also the *Tongue and Voice of the Lord.* Conscience is God's Deputy, what that speaks, he speaks, that accuses or excuses according to the Law his own Finger hath written on thy heart. Therefore stop not its mouth, stifle not its checks, put it not to silence, but hear it out; and say unto it, *Say on.*

2. He speaks to thee by his Word. This is beyond controversie with all, but downright Atheists, that what the Scriptures speak, God speaketh. This teacheth thee to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, godly in this present world.

for a Full Hearing. 33

world. There's not a *sin* against the Law of *Nature* or *Grace*, which this forbids not under pain of *eternal death*; nor a *duty* of either, to which it encourages not, with the promise of *eternal life*. This shews the equity, the reasonableness, the excellency, the necessity of every *Duty*, *Virtue*, *Grace*: and the iniquity, unreasonableness, baseness, danger of every *Corruption*, *Vice* and *Sin*. Hear, consider, weigh well what it saith.

And dare not to *go on* where God's Word bids thee *stop*; nor dare to *stand still* where God's Word bids thee *go forward*.

Time will not give me leave, nor will the Text well bear it, to plead God's Cause. I may only admonish you to hearken how he pleads it in  
his

his Word himself; where you shall meet with all the cogent Arguments *Right Reason* can be moved by, in the behalf of *Virtue, Temperance, Justice, Charity* and *universal Holiness*: and against *Vice, Profaneness, Debauchery, Dishonesty* and *Irreligion*, drawn from his authority over thee, and Benefits to thee, from all the Attributes of his Nature, from all the Methods and Instruments of his governing the Rational World. His *Promises* and *Threatnings*, his *Rewards* and *Punishments*, &c. So from *Christ*, the example of his *Holy Life*, the love and design of his *Bloody Death*, &c.

Now when thou art moved to any *Duty*, or tempted to any *Sin*, before thou refuse the *one*, or yield to the *other*, hear fully what *God* in his Word saith for it, or against it. Let *God* make his full *Plea* before thou  
 yieldest,

yieldest, and givest sentence for the *World*, the *Flesh*, the *Devil*; do not precipitate, and because one reason prevails not, resolve to hear no more, but hear him out, *Master*, *Say on*.

If his bare *authority* prevail not, try what the obliging sense of his *Benefits* may do. If *Thus saith the Lord*, be not enough, hear him, saying, *O foolish people, will ye thus requite the Lord?* If his love constrain thee not, try whether his fear, and the terrors of the Lord may not restrain thee, if the *promises* and *hopes* of going to Heaven be too light, put in the *wrath* revealed from Heaven, and the consideration of *eternal Burnings*.

If *Gods Glory* move thee not, hear what he saith of thine *own interest*: if the declaration of the *promises*

mises and threatenings suffice not, hear what he saith of the fullfilling and exemplifying of them upon others, to give thee warning.

I suggest these few Instances transiently, which may teach you to make many more ; and I beseech you do it, hear all *God* saith for *Duty*, and against *Sin*, before you reject the one, or yield to the other ; and remember that the sinfulness of the world, and their final condemnation is chiefly ascribed to their not hearing what *God* saith to them in the Word. Peruse with greatest seriousness that awakening place, *Prov.* 1. 24. to the end : which if you mind, as you should do, I hope you'll give *God* a Fuller Hearing for the future ; and when *he* speaks to you in his Word, will let him plead his Cause at large, and *Say on*.



3. He speaks to you by his Spirit, whispering secretly and silently to your Hearts. There is an intimate converse betwixt God's Spirit and Man's, of which the standers by can take no notice.

*Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk in it, Isa. 30. 21.*

Hear him therefore as a *spirit of conviction*, pleading with thee to convince thee of, and bring thee to repentance for thy past Sins.

As a *spirit of excitation* stirring and quickening thee to present Duty, as a *spirit of restraint* to withdraw thee from thy sinful practices or purposes. *Oh do not this abominable thing which I hate.*

As

As a spirit of *Application*, setting home general truths to a man's particular case: this concerns thee, *Thou art the Man: Generalia non pungunt*: therefore the spirit in the reading or hearing the Word, uses to infer from Generals, and apply in this or the like manner; *If the wrath of God be revealed from Heaven against all unrighteousness, then against mine.* If every one be accursed that continues not in all things that are written in the Law, then so am I. If every one that repents not must perish, then must I, if I repent not, the  
spirit

*spirit and the bride say come,  
 and whoever will, let him take  
 of the water of life freely ;  
 then I may take it, 'tis as free to  
 me as to any other, God hath  
 not excluded me, if I exclude  
 not my self, & sic in cæteris,  
 in the general threats, promi-  
 ses, precepts. Oh therefore  
 when the spirit stands at the  
 door and knocks, open to him ;  
 when he calls, answer him.  
 Resist him not, provoke him  
 not, quench him not, grieve  
 him not, put him not to si-  
 lence, treat him not rudely,  
 turn not a deaf ear, but say  
 unto him, What wilt thou  
 have me do ? Speak, Lord,  
 thy*

*thy servant heareth :* Blessed Lord, *Say on.*

The last improvement I shall make of the words, is to mind you to get ready a good Plea against the time God shall call for it, and give you the liberty to use it.

There is a day approaching, nay, in some degree now is, in which we must appear at *God's Tribunal*, and though we must expect a strict, yet we may assure our selves of a *Fair Trial*. God will hear us out : he will give us leave to *Say on* all that we can say with reason, for our just defence : *Isay 41.21. Produce your cause,*  
*will*

for a full Hearing. 43

*will the Lord say, bring forth  
your strong reasons, saith the  
king of Jacob.*

Resolve therefore with the  
Prophet, *Habbak. 2. 1.* To  
watch to see what he will say  
to you, and what you shall an-  
swer, when you are reprov'd or  
argued with.

Now God hath two Tribu-  
nals: one in this world, the  
other in the world to come.  
The first erected in every  
man's Breast, his Conscience  
enlightened by the word,  
which is *magni judicii præ ju-  
dicium*: as a private Sessions  
preparatory to the general  
and grand Assise, which is the  
D second,

*second, the judgment seat of Christ, at which we must all appear to give an account of all we have done in the flesh, whether good or evil.*

I beseech you therefore be-  
think your selves before hand,  
provide your *Plea*, for God  
will certainly call for it.

*First*, What hast thou to  
say when God shall summon  
thee to appear before his *De-  
puty*; thy own *Conscience*?  
and shall demand a reason of  
thy ways? O *man*, why dost  
thou do *so* or *so*? I am ready  
to hear thee; *Say on*.

A wise man should do no-  
thing, for which he cannot  
give

for a Full Hearing. 45

give a good reason. And I know no reason good, but this, or what is reduceable to this. God *commands* me, or at least *allows* me so to do. I appeal therefore to the Consciences of all that hear me this day, whether you can give this reason for all the actions of your lives, God *commands* me, or *allows* me to do what I do. If you can, 'tis well : happy Congregation, blessed Assembly are you !

But this is a thing rather to be *wished* it were, than *hoped* it is. If therefore there be any who comes to bear false witness against his Neigh-

D 2                      bour,

bour, who comes, though he gilds over his malice and violence with pretext of Law, to vex, to wrong, or to oppress his Brother: or to defend what he knows to be an unrighteous Cause, to the ruine of the poor and innocent, can he say *so*? Can he that swears *falsly* by the God of Truth, or customarily by the name of him who is a God of Holiness, say, *so*? Can the Drunkard, the Lyar, the Adulterer, the Thief, the Despiser of Holiness, say God commands him, or allows him to be such?

I beseech you deal uprightly, and venture not to do any thing,



thing, of which you cannot give a good account and reason to God and your own Consciences; *for if your heart condemn you, God is greater than your heart, and will condemn you much more.*

Lastly, I pray consider well what *Plea* thou wilt make at the day of Judgment; 'tis an awful and awakening thing to name it, or to think on't. But it will be a most dreadful thing then to stand mute, not as some do at the Bar, through *sullenness* or *stomach*; but as the man who thrust in to the *Wedding Feast* without a *Wedding Garment* to be

D 3      *speechless*

*speechless, and have nothing to say, when God bids them, Say on.*

And I most earnestly entreat you, and adjure you not to satisfy your selves in any *Pleas* which will not be allowed, or hold good at that day.

'Twill not serve your turn then to say, I neither believed, nor thought of such a day; if I had, I would have prepared better for it: nor to say I knew indeed, and sometimes thought of that day, and resolved to be prepared before I died, but that I was prevented by dying sooner than I made account I should.      No,

No, nor to say, I was baptized, and kept my Church, and sometimes said my Prayers, and only did what I saw others do before me, who were my Betters, and wiser men than I, and though I often did what I fear I should not, I was resolved to say I am very sorry, and cry God mercy when I came to die. He that hath no better stuff than this, no wiser *Plea* to make, will have little list to *Say on*, when God shall bid him do so.

But you will ask me what *Plea* will then hold? I answer, I find none *in terminis* in all the Bible, and 'tis not

wisdom to be wise above and beyond what's written. I find one indeed made for them by the Judge, *Matth. 25. I was hungry, and ye fed me, &c.* But none made formally by any man as for himself, I will not therefore assume the boldness to prescribe a form to any man, to plead his cause then, nor in express words can formally conclude what I would my self then say: yet for the matter and substance I would be glad to be able with confidence to say, when God shall bid me plead my Cause, and answer for my self.

O Lord, who knowest all things,

things, thou knowest I lov'd thee sincerely, though not perfectly. And that I earnestly desired to know thy whole will, and seriously endeavoured to fulfil it, and unfeignedly repented of my transgressions of it. Thou knowest, Lord, I thankfully accepted the Grace offered in the Gospel-Covenant; and then did, and still do most earnestly desire to be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness, but that righteousness which is of God through faith in Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.

Such

Such a *Plea* made up of the *conditions* of the New Covenant, *Faith* and *Repentance*, *love and universal new obedience* in some measure performed by the assistance of *Divine Grace*, would I be glad to be provided of against that day.

And I doubt not but whoever can make such a *Plea* in truth, will have great boldness to *Say on*, when God shall bid him, and shall hear God say to him, *Well done, good and faithful servant, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee before the foundation of the World.*

For

For which Blessed Sentence,  
he of his infinite Mercy pre-  
pare us, who hath by his Blood  
purchased that Kingdom for  
all that love him, and wait for  
his Appearance. *Amen.*

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**F I N I S.**

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